

Message Text

SECRET

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PLOS, XL, TD, US, ECLA
SUBJECT: ECLA CARIBBEAN CONFERENCE ON CARIBBEAN
LAW OF THE SEA

REF: A) PORT OF SPAIN 2507; B) PORT OF SPAIN 2634

SUMMARY: TRINIDAD PLAN FOR METROPOLE COUNTRY PARTICIPATION
IN CARIBBEAN LAW OF SEA CONFERENCE UNDERCUT AT HAVANA
ECLA MEETING. T&T PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS ANGERED BY
APPARENT SABOTAGE OF HIS CAREFULLY PLANNED SCENARIO,
AND ONLY RELUCTANTLY AGREED THAT LATIN RIPARIAN COUNTRIES
BE INCLUDED. END SUMMARY.

1. WHILE MEETING PRIVATELY WITH PRIME MINISTER ERIC
WILLIAMS NOV 12 ON ANOTHER SUBJECT WE BEGAN DISCUSSING
THE RECENT ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF THE CARIBBEAN
COMMISSION OF ECLA AT HAVANA OCT 31-NOV 4. WILLIAMS
INFORMED ME THAT, ON THE BASIS OF A DIRECT PLEA TO
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HIM FROM MEXICAN PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA JUST PRIOR TO

THE CONFERENCE, TRINIDAD HAD RELUCTANTLY AGREED THAT THE PROJECTED JANUARY TECHNICAL MEETING ON THE LOS WOULD BE EXPANDED NOT ONLY TO INCLUDE THE ISLAND STATES AND TERRITORIES BUT ALSO THE LATION RIPARIAN STATES AROUND THE CARIBBEAN UNDER THE JURISDICTIONS OF THE BOGOTA AND MEXICO CITY ECLA OFFICES. WILLIAMS STATED THAT HE WAS SOMEWHAT UNHAPPY WITH THIS SINCE THE ORIGINAL PLAN HAD BEEN FOR A TWO-STEP CONFERENCE, WITH THE RIPARIAN STATES TO BE INCLUDED ONLY AT THE SECOND MEETING AFTER THE ISLAND TERRITORIES HAD HAD A PRIOR CHANCE TO CONCERT THEIR INTERESTS. HOWEVER, HE HAD CONCLUDED THAT IF THERE WAS TO BE A CONFRONTATION ANYWAY IT JUST MIGHT AS WELL OCCUR ALL AT ONE MEETING.

2. I EXPRESSED SATISFACTION FOR THIS CLARIFICATION OF THE PRESS REPORTING ON THE HAVANA CONFERENCE, BUT ALSO NOTED THAT FROM A CLOSE READING OF THE PRESS THERE DID NOT SEEM TO BE ANY PROVISION IN THE DECISION OF THE HAVANA CONFEREES FOR PARTICIPATION OF THE USG AND OTHER METROPOLE STATES SUCH AS FRANCE, THE UK, AND THE NETHERLANDS WHO WERE DIRECTLY CONCERNED IN VIEW OF TERRITORIES IN THE CARIBBEAN SEA. WILLIAMS EXPRESSED PUZZLEMENT AT THIS, AND NOTED THAT IT HAD BEEN QUITE CLEAR, AS HE HAD REASSURED ME REPEATEDLY, THAT THE "METROPOLE STATES" AS HE CALLED THEM WERE TO BE FULLY INCLUDED IN THE LOS MEETING. HE AGAIN CONSULTED A LETTER BEFORE HIM FROM ECLA SEC GEN IGLESIAS REPORTING TO WILLIAMS ON THE RECENT HAVANA MEETING AND NOTED THAT NOWHERE IN THAT LETTER DID IGLESIAS INDICATE THAT THERE HAD BEEN ANY PROBLEM OVER THE METROPOLE ATTENDANCE QUESTION. AS WE TALKED, REAL DOUBTS OBVIOUSLY CORSED HIS MIND, HOWEVER, AS HE PHONED HIS SECRETARY TO STOP A TELEGRAM TO IGLESIAS HE HAD JUST DICTATED BEFORE I ENTERED HIS OFFICE. HE SAID HE HAD TO ADD SOMETHING IMPORTANT. HE THEN (STILL IN MY PRESENCE) CALLED FOREIGN MINISTER CUTHBERT JOSEPH ON THE PHONE AND ASKED JOSEPH TO EXPLAIN. JOSEPH HAD BEEN THE CHIEF GOTT DELEGATE TO THE HAVANA MEETING. FROM THE ONE SIDE OF THE

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CONVERSATION WHICH I WAS HEARING CAME SUCH EXPRESSIONS FROM THE PRIME MINISTER AS: "YOU NEVER TOLD ME THAT WHEN WE DISCUSSED THE MEETING.... WHY DON'T I HAVE YOUR WRITTEN REPORT YET?...WHEN AM I GOING TO GET IT?...WHAT DOES GRENADA HAVE TO DO WITH IT?"

3. DURING THE PHONE CALL WILLIAMS BECAME INCREASINGLY GRIM AND HE WAS SEETHING WHEN HE PUT THE PHONE DOWN.

HE TOLD ME THAT APPARENTLY I WAS RIGHT. OTHERS AT THE CONFERENCE, INCLUDING GRENADA WHICH DID NOT WANT THE UKG TO REPRESENT THE ASSOCIATED STATES, HAD DIRECTLY OPPOSED THE INCLUSION OF THE METROPOLE COUNTRIES. HE SAID HE WOULD DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS IF HE COULD AND ASKED ME NOT SAY ANYTHING FOR THE TIME BEING. HE WOULD CONSULT WITH MINISTER JOSEPH AND IMMEDIATELY CONTACT ECLA SEC GEN IGLESIAS.

4. COMMENT: THIS IS AN UNFORTUNATE DEVELOPMENT FVO OUR STANDPOINT, AND ALSO FROM THAT OF WILLIAMS. HE IS FINDING THAT HIS CAREFULLY LAID SCENARIO FOR THE CARIBBEAN COMMITTEE OF ECLA IS NOW NOT ENTIRELY IN HIS HANDS. WHETHER HE WILL BE ABLE TO PUT BACK ON TRACK THE METROPLOE PARTICIPATION IN THE JANUARY LOS CONFERENCE IS PROBLEMATIC. PERHAPS AS HOST GOVERNMENT THE GOTT COULD INVITE US AS NON-VOTING OBSERVERS AT LEAST. THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN. IN VIEW OF THE VERY PRIVATE NATURE OF THIS DIALOGUE AND THE PRIME MINISTER'S DIRECT REQUEST TO ME NOT TO DISCUSS IT UNTIL HE COULD TRY TO SORT THINGS OUT, I CAUTION ALL ADDRESSEES NOT TO REVEAL KNOWLEDGE OF WILLIAMS' REACTION. PUBLISHED REPORTS OF THE RESULTS OF THE HAVANA MEETING PROVIDE SUFFICIENT SOURCE FOR DISCUSSION OF PARTICIPATION ISSUE AS REQUIRED WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS. I KNOW THAT THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR HERE IS ALREADY EXPRESSING CONCERN TO THOSE LEVELS OF THE T&T GOVERNMENT ACCESSIBLE TO HIM. TO REVEAL OUR KNOWLEDGE OF WILLIAMS' REACTION OR CURRENT EFFORTS COULD BOTH UNDERCUT THAT EFFORT AND ELIMINATE OUR ACCESS TO HIM.

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